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ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *SCOMBEROMORUS* *COMMERTSONI* (LACÉPÈDE) IN ST. GEORGE BAY, LEBANON*

On October 29, 1964, a 49.0 cm. (T.L.) specimen of a fish in the genus *Scomberomorus* Lacépède was taken in a commercial shore seine catch in St. George Bay, Lebanon, and given to the Biological Laboratories of the American University of Beirut for study. A second specimen, 60.3 cm. (T.L.) and taken in the same fashion and locality, was received on December 22, 1964. HORNELL (1935) reported the occurrence of the genus in Palestine based on a single specimen identified to genus only by J.R. NORMAN of the British Museum. DODERLEIN (1888) reported a 57.2 cm. (T.L.) specimen of *Cybium commersoni* Cuvier from Palermo, Italy. TORTONESE (1949) reexamined this specimen, still preserved at Palermo University, and reidentified it as *Scomberomorus maculatus* Mitchill. To the best of our knowledge these statements by HORNELL, DODERLEIN and TORTONESE are the only original reports on the genus in the Mediterranean Sea prior to the one at hand.

The meristics, morphometry and pigmentation of these two specimens indicates a tentative identification of *Scomberomorus commersoni* (Lacépède). This identification has been corroborated by Dr. FRANK MATHER of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Type specimens were not examined.

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Table 1 — Meristics and morphometry of two specimens of *Scomberomorus commersoni* Lacépède taken in St. George Bay, Lebanon, 1964

	Specimen taken Oct. 29, 1964	Specimen taken Dec. 22, 1964
Total length (cms)	49.0	60.3
Standard length (cms)	40.5	49.5
Weight (gms)	884.0	1550.0
Fin formula	D. XVI 16+10, A. 16+10	D. XVI 16+10, A. 16+9
Number of gill rakers	L. 6; R. 5	L. 6; R. 5
Number of teeth	L.U. 13; L.L. 11 R.U. 14; R.L. 13	L.U. 13; L.L. 14 R.U. 19; R.L. 14
Distance, in cm. from snout to:		
a. anterior edge of fleshy orbit	3.8	4.1
b. posterior edge of fleshy orbit	4.1	5.5
c. posterior edge of bony operculum	9.5	10.5
d. anterior insertion of first dorsal fin	21.3	26.5
e. anterior insertion of second dorsal fin	10.2	12.2
f. anterior insertion of right pelvic fin	10.5	11.6
g. anterior insertion of right pectoral fin	10.1	11.1
h. anterior insertion of anal fin	22.0	29.0
Maximum body depth	9.4	10.7

Our two sexually immature specimens have elongate, moderately compressed bodies and jaws armed with single series of large, strongly compressed, triangular teeth. The snout is firm. The dorsal profile anterior to the origin of the spiny dorsal fin is more or less straight. The lower jaw is marked with a conspicuous angle.

The feebly carinate and slightly undulating lateral line dips conspicuously behind the second dorsal fin and terminates in a peduncular keel, which in turn is placed between two slightly oblique secondary keels. The darkly pigmented caudal fin is strongly falcate and marked centrally with a rectangular extension of minute silvery scales. The larger specimen shows irregular, faint transverse bars and spots, while the smaller specimen shows a more persistent and conspicuous pattern of transversely elongated spots. The webbing supported by the first

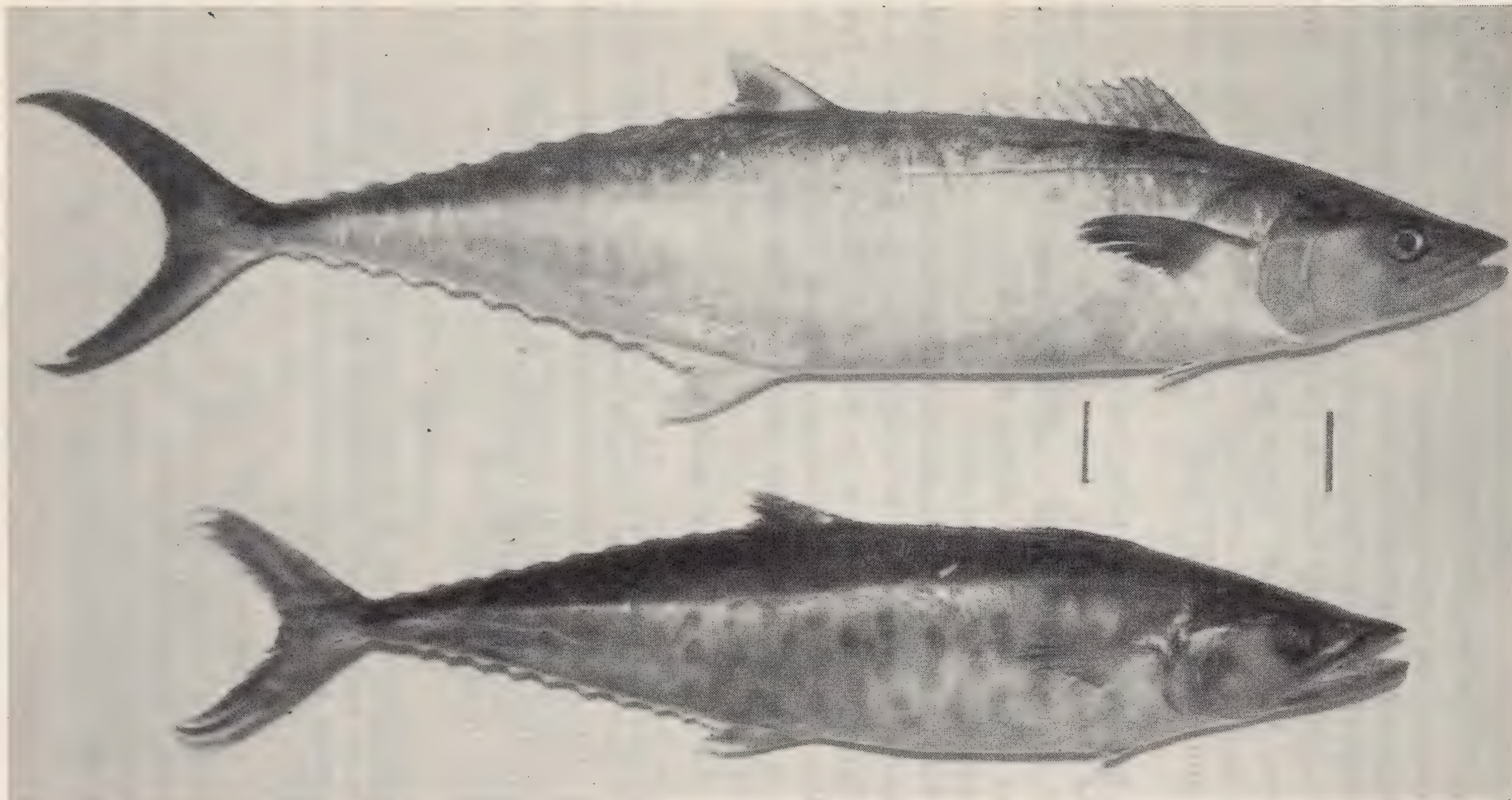


Fig. 1 - *Scomberomorus commersoni* (Lacépède) taken from St. George Bay, Lebanon, on October 29 (lower) and December 22, 1964.
The outer edges of the two marks are 10 cms apart.

seven to eight spines of the first dorsal fin is darkly pigmented, as is the entirety of the pectorals. The dorsal fin is paralleled by a band of fine corrugations that narrow posteriorly. The posterior and more distal parts of the second dorsal fin are dusky. The dorsal finlets are dark, while the ventral finlets and posterior part of the spiny dorsal fin are milky. The anal fin is faintly dusky. In life, the ground color is a brilliant silver coursed with blue and bronze irridescence.

The head is crowned with grey. Two nares precede the eye. A patch of faint yellow appears posterior to the eye above the silvery cheeks.

The species is reported to be common in the Red Sea and other parts of the Indo-Pacific region. It is conceivable that these specimens migrated through the Suez Canal or are the descendants of ones that did. The former is the more likely in that this species is unknown to Lebanese commercial fisherman.

We wish to thank Mr. Hassan Saghir, his father, and his brother Mohammad for their kindness in bringing these two specimens to our attention. Special thanks are due to Dr. Richard H. Backus and Dr. Frank Mather, both of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, for their kind help in identification and the reading of this note.

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RIASSUNTO

Due individui di *Scomberomorus commersoni* furono pescati nella baia di San Giorgio (Libano). Essi penetrarono probabilmente dal mar Rosso ed assumono un particolare interesse in quanto il gen. *Scomberomorus* fu rinvenuto molto raramente nel Mediterraneo.
